travel, commerce, speed, literature, athletes, thieves, liars, and standards of measure.

Poseidon. God of the sea, a sibling of Zeus. Well known for his wrath, he was also the god and cause of earthquakes.

The Olympians came to power after their war with the Titans and dwelled atop Mount Olympus, a real mountain, one of the highest in Europe at more than 9,000 feet.

Many narratives centered on heroes like Aeneas and Perseus, and on their unusual births, often beginning with a god falling in love with a mortal (and sometimes disguising themselves in order to seduce the mortal). Other stories tell the mythical origins of cultural artifacts, such as the theft of fire by Prometheus and Hermes' creation of the lyre. Above all other historical events, many myth stories revolved around the Trojan War. While the war was most likely fought, it is doubtful it took on such a scale as myth has ascribed to it, and as the myths grew, the story of the war moved further and further from reality. What was probably a simple battle of conquest became in Greek myth an epic struggle that begins with Eris's golden apple and proceeds to the judgment of Paris, his abduction of Helen of Troy, the deaths of Hector and Agamemnon, the fall of Troy, and the hero stories that became the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Aeneid.

The Iliad and the Odyssey were Homer’s main works, though Homer, a blind poet, may not have actually existed. The poems recount the end of the Trojan War and Odysseus’s lengthy journey home in its aftermath. The Homeric hymns were also attributed to Homer in antiquity and use the same dactylic hexameter. They vary in length, another possible indication of multiple authorship, but each hymn focuses on one of the gods, singing his praises and telling his story.

See also GREEK DRAMA; GREEK ORATORY AND RHETORIC; HOMERIC EPICS.


GREEK ORATORY AND RHETORIC

Oratory and rhetoric were key components of Greek culture. The Hellenistic world was primarily an oral culture—as was most of the world prior to the invention of the printing press—with public lectures and performances being the primary literary form of the time. The orator (rhetor) was a celebrated figure in the society, and rhetoric (rhetorike), the art of the spoken word, was a strongly valued element of the classical education, with the most highly educated receiving particularly strong rhetorical training. Before the fifth century B.C.E. rhetoric was not directly taught as a subject in itself; rather, students memorized important texts, usually poetry and especially the HOMERIC EPICS, which they would, then perform at festivals. Stock phrases, proverbs, and maxims were memorized and employed when needed to make a speech more persuasive. Compositional and rhetorical skill was thus obtained by imitation of the features of classic texts rather than through direct instruction. This changed by the latter half of the fifth century B.C.E.—the dawn of SOPHISM.

The study of rhetoric as a subject can be attributed in part to the necessity created by the fifth-century B.C.E. Athenian judicial system, which required the prosecuting party and the defendant to give formal speeches arguing their cases. Well-organized and-executed speeches were more persuasive, a fact that led to the proliferation of handbooks of judicial rhetoric to give assistance to those preparing such speeches. Eventually, the system allowed a litigant to hire a speechwriter (famous speechwriters of this era include Lysias, Demosthenes, and Antiphon) to write a speech that the litigant would then memorize and deliver before the court. The structure of Athenian democratic government, which was easily influenced by smooth-talking political leaders, also helped lead to the study of rhetoric, since it could be employed as a tool with which the citizens (and thus Athens itself) could be swayed.

It was at this time that the Sophists of the fifth century B.C.E. (such as Gorgias and Protagoras, who were immortalized by Plato’s dialogues) came onto the scene, offering to teach argument and rhetoric to those willing to pay—often a great deal—for their services. The Sophists were a group of thinkers from all over the Greek world who, through their mastery of the spoken word, were regarded as masters of argument and debate. They emphasized that two contradictory arguments can be made about any given issue and that, at any given time, the weaker argument could be made the stronger, meaning that knowledge could never be absolute and debate should always remain open.

Sophists acquired a reputation for being able to effectively and persuasively argue both sides of any given issue—as Protagoras’s Antilogies (Opposing statements)
and the late fifth-century B.C.E. *Dissoi Logoi* (Double arguments) show. Above all, Sophists were interested in eristic, the art of refutation and verbal conflict. Rhetorical contests were staged on occasion, such as on a feast day, with the audience enthralled by the skills of the best sophistic orators. Plato and Aristotle took an antagonistic stance toward the Sophists, regarding them as deceivers more interested in verbal sleight of hand and debate than in truth or reason, a view that has more or less remained to this day.

The contributions of the Sophists to the art of oratory made an indelible mark on Hellenistic culture, as rhetoric as a skill in itself came to be emphasized and taught as a part of a standard education. After a child had learned to read and write (at seven or eight years old), he or she progressed to study with a *grammaticus* (grammarian). The handbook of Dionysius, *Thrax*, written in the early first century B.C.E. and used as a textbook for the next 15 centuries, outlines this training in literature, which focused on grammar and basic literary criticism. At around 12 to 14 years old, the student would then begin the study of rhetoric taught by a rhetorician.

Rhetorical instruction was made up of three fixed elements. The first two elements included the study of rhetorical theory and the study of models from prior literature (such as Homeric speeches, the dialogues of Plato, or the speeches of Demosthenes). After completion of the first two elements, the student progressed to declamation exercises in which, after listening to speeches by the rhetorician, the student would receive an assigned topic on which he would write, memorize, and perform a speech based on a fixed pattern for that type of speech and subject matter.

**SPEECH CATEGORIES**

Types of speeches were commonly divided into three categories. The deliberative speech was concerned with a decision to be made about the future, usually in political context, such as whether a given law should be passed or whether a war should be waged. The judicial speech was a speech that argued concerning the truth about past events and was typically used in the courtroom. The epideictic speech was typically for show or entertainment and dealt with topics such as beauty, credit and blame, or praise. As democratic city-states were replaced by imperial rule, its overall importance faded somewhat, as did the importance of judicial oratory. On the other hand, epideictic speech became the most common exhibition of trained oratory, often being used to celebrate military victories or feast days. Deliberative oratory continued to have some function in ambassadorial relations, military decisions, and management of local governments.

Rhetorical art was usually divided into five skills also called canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Invention involved the process of finding something to say; this skill was trained by learning conventional categories, *topoi* (common-places), which dealt with the main rhetorical possibilities for nearly any theme.

For example, for an *encomium* (speech of praise), a person's noble birth, parentage, noble deeds, education, friends, and courage (among other things) would be included among the possible *topoi*. This greatly aided the speechwriting process by giving concrete starting points for brainstorming.

Each speech was organized based on four elements. The *prooemium* (introduction), sometimes called the proem, is not only to introduce the issue at hand but also to stir the feelings of the audience or (in the case of a judicial speech) to dispel prejudice. The *diegesis* (narrative or statement of facts) tells the speaker's side of the story; the subjects involved should be characterized positively or negatively, depending on the goal of the speech. The *pistis* (proofs) section provides evidence for the case—by statement of fact, logical, ethical, or emotional appeals—in order to sway the audience. This section also included refutations of the opposing side's anticipated arguments; later orators (such as Cicero or Quintilian) sometimes considered this refutation a separate section (the *refutatio*) of the speech directly following the *pistis*. The final element of a speech is the *epilogos* (epilogue), in which the speaker reinforces his prior statements, attempts to reinforce a positive attitude in the audience toward himself and his argument, and closes with a forceful conclusion.

After a slow decline in importance as Greek democracy gave way to the Roman Empire, classical Greek rhetoric experienced a revival of sorts in the Second Sophistic period of the mid-first through the mid-second centuries C.E. This in turn had a great impact on Christian literature and oratory, as can be seen in Luke-Acts or figures such as Augustine of Hippo or John Chrysostom. As a result, the impact of Greek rhetoric continues today, with modern public speaking and literature heavily based on the principles of oratory produced in the Hellenistic Period.

See also Greek city-states; Greek drama.

Gregory the Great
(c. 540–604 C.E.) pope and saint

Gregory was born of a noble family that had already given the church two popes. A strong Christian upbringing and an excellent education in law prepared him for a future in both the civil and ecclesiastical realms. He was only 30 when his natural administrative abilities landed him the appointment of prefect of the city of Rome, a position bearing responsibility for the finances, food, and defense of the city. This was at a time when the invasion of the Lombards in other parts of Italy was causing a stream of refugees to descend on Rome. Gregory had only occupied this position for a short time when his father died, enabling Gregory to refocus the direction of his life and to respond to the grace of conversion, which he said he had long postponed.

He left public office and turned his family estate on the Caelian Hill into a monastery dedicated to St. Andrew. He also founded six monasteries on lands owned by his family in Sicily in order to provide for refugee monks who had to abandon their monasteries due to the invasions of the Lombards. As a monk at St. Andrew’s, he applied himself to prayer, meditation on the sacred scriptures, and the study of the Latin Fathers. His initial enthusiasm for the ascetical life led to excessive fasting, producing stomach ailments that plagued Gregory the rest of his life.

Gregory was ordained a deacon by Pelagius II and sent to Constantinople as the pope’s representative at the Byzantine court (579–586 C.E.). In Constantinople, Gregory continued to live an ascetic life in the company of monks he had brought with him from St. Andrew’s. He also came into contact with the tradition of the Eastern Fathers and with Eastern monasticism and made important political and ecclesiastical contacts. At the suggestion of his monks, he began to give them a series of conferences of the book of Job, which would become his longest work, the celebrated Moralia. Returning to Rome, Gregory continued to advise the pope, now as one of the famed seven deacons of the city. During a plague that devastated the city, Gregory threw himself into aiding the stricken populace, organizing penitential processions and raising the spirits of the city.

When Pelagius II succumbed to the plague, both the clergy and the people acclaimed Gregory pope. As the first monk to accede to the chair of Peter, Gregory’s early letters as bishop of Rome testify to his struggle to reconcile an active life with his deepest desires for a life of contemplation. In reconciling these two vocations in his own life, he would insist on the need for every Christian, religious or lay, to practice the vita mixta, to balance the spiritual life with both works of charity and time for God alone. He would also draw on monks to help him in active ministries, either as bishops or as missionaries, as when he sent Augustine (future bishop of Canterbury) and 40 monks from St. Andrew’s to Britain in 597 to bring the gospel to the Anglo-Saxons. Pope Gregory’s continual endeavors to help his people were complicated by the emperor’s dilatory dealings with the barbarians.

In 594 an exasperated Gregory took matters into his own hands, which—while evoking the displeasure of the emperor—resulted in saving the city from the destruction threatened by Agilulf, the Lombard king. In the wake of the civil government’s failure to take responsibility, the people would henceforth regard Gregory as their true leader and protector.

Gregory’s writings include letters, homilies, commentaries on scripture, and works specifically directed to the clergy or to the laity. His works continue to be of great value for their teachings on morality, asceticism, and mysticism. Like Augustine of Hippo, whose writings he knew well, he continually combines lofty doctrine with personal experience. A theme that permeates all his works is the desire for God, who alone can fulfill a person’s interior emptiness. The desire results in interior peace, a peace coming from God, which means that the very desire for him is already a part of his peace.

A work designed for the common people is the Dialogues, a series of discussions with a certain Peter the deacon. They were written during a period of natural catastrophes and barbarian invasions and are meant to show that holiness—through examples of sixth-century saints—is possible even in their own chaotic times. The